

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 EUR-25 SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03

L-03 H-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 PRS-01

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R 051225Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3856

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, TS

SUBJ: IMPENDING VIP VISIT TO TUNISIA

REF: TUNIS A-138

1. HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR. TOLD ME THAT TUNISIA HAS INVITED ABOUT 83 PROMINENT AMERICANS AND CANADIANS TO COME TO TUNISIA WITH THE THIRD BOEING 727 WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO BE FERRIED HERE DECEMBER 15. ALTHOUGH HE TOLD ME THAT 60 HAD ACCEPTED, HE IS BEING UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SECRETIVE ABOUT IDENTITY OF THESE VIP'S, POSSIBLY BECAUSE HE STILL HAS SOME DOUBTS AS TO WHO WILL ACTUALLY COME. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED COPY OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE GUEST LIST FOR TRIP WHICH INCLUDES SUCH PROMINENT PERSONS AS SENATORS HUMPHREY, MCGEE, AND TUNNEY, CONGRESSMAN DIGGS, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE RUSK, WALTER CRONKITE, SHIRLEY MCLAINE AND FORMER AMBASSADORS GEORGE MCGEE AND FRANCIS RUSSELL. VISIT BEING ORGANIZED BY TUNISIA-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION WHOSE PRESIDENT IS BOURGUIBA, JR. AND ITS AMERICAN COUNTERPART TUNISIAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION WHOSE PRESIDENT IS AMBASSADOR RUSSEL. PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL OF ASSOCIATION, IS DELAYING HIS TRIP TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (TUNIS 6716) IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE GROUP ON DECEMBER 16. FOR TECHNICAL

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REASONS, GROUP IS BEING FLOWN TO PARIS WHERE THEY WILL

ALL BOARD BOEING 727 (NAMED "MONASTIR") FOR ONWARD TRIP TO TUNIS. STAY IN TUNISIA, WHICH WILL INCLUDE VISITS TO DJERBA, NEFTA, KAIROUAN AND SOUSSE, AND RETURN TRIP VIA COMMERCIAL AIRLINE TO US VIA EUROPE AFTER ABOUT ONE WEEK HERE, ALL FINANCED BY GOT.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH GOT TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR INITIATING AND CONDUCTING THIS VIP TOUR, EMBASSY CONCERNED RE REPERCUSSIONS IF TOUR IS FAILURE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF POLITICAL IMPORTANCE WHICH BOURGUIBA, JR. IS GIVING TO VISIT AND FACT THAT PRESIDENT BOURBUIBA IS DELAYING HIS TRIP IN ORDER TO MEET GROUP. WHILE EMBASSY IS STEERING CLEAR OF DIRECT INVOLVEMTN WE WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS TO WHO IS ACTUALLY COMING. WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF DEPT. WOULD CALL AMBASSADOR RUSSELL, WHO WE UNDERSTAND IS ORGANIZING US END OF VISIT, AND, ON DISCREET BASIS, OBTAIN HIS BEST ESTIMATE AS TO ACTUAL PARTICIPATION AND INFORMATION ON OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRIP.
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